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U. S. Dep.

Fri., Oct. 28, 1927

Housekeepers' Chat

(Not for Publication)

Subject: "Breakfasts for Children"

ANNOUNCEMENT: The following program includes suggestions about breakfasts in general; questions and answers on children's diets; and three breakfast menus for children, from the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics. Bulletins available: "Good Proportions in the Diet," and "Food for Young Children."

--ooOoo--

This morning I casually remarked that I intended to talk about breakfasts today. "all suggestions gratefully received," I said, "providing, of course, they are practical. Uncle Ebenezer, since you are old, and full of wisdom, I'll begin with you. Can you offer any suggestions, of a constructive nature, about your morning meal?"

"Let me see," said Uncle Ebenezer, helping himself to another hot muffin. "In the first place, I want my breakfast served promptly at 7:30. If the first course is grapefruit, or oranges, I want the fruit properly cut, so I won't have to carve it at the table. I want my coffee hot, my bacon and eggs hot, and my muffins hot. If we have toast, I want it cut moderately thin, and well toasted. If we have cooked cereal, I want it salted. A trifling matter, like unsalted oatmeal, makes me blue for a whole morning, Aunt Sammy."

I took due note of Uncle Ebenezer's observations, and then asked Fred his idea of a good breakfast.

"I'm not particular," said Fred, "just so I have plenty to eat. I like to eat hearty breakfast, so I won't get hungry in school. We study geometry, just before noon, and I can't keep my mind on isosceles triangles, if my stomach is yearning for meat and potatoes."

"Billy," I said, "you're next. What do you like to have at breakfast time?"

"Flowers," said six-year-old Billy. "I like flowers on the table, and flowers painted on the dishes, and flowers in the corners of the tablecloth."

"So do I," said Uncle Ebenezer. "I like my breakfasts served in style, even though I am not what you'd call a hearty eater." With that remark, Uncle Ebenezer helped himself to his fourth hot muffin, stuck the morning paper in his pocket, and left for the day.

When the family had gone, to work and to school, I jotted down a few notes about breakfast, beginning with breakfast table linen. There are so many attractive tablecloths in the shops this fall. Stripes and plaids and checks, in yellow and white, green and white, blue and white, and pink and white, with napkins to match. One of the most charming is an old-fashioned checked pattern, in white, and Turkey red. Others have white centers, with bands of color. If you like bright table linen, and gay china, surely breakfast time is the time

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to use them.

Of course one must select, in combining colorful china, and colorful linen. In the house furnishings department, of a downtown shop, I saw three breakfast-table arrangements this week. The first table was covered with a cloth of unbleached linen. The dishes were white, with a green and black striped pattern. The centerpiece was a low bowl of tiny, yellow, chrysanthemums.

The second table was covered with a white cloth, and set with the familiar blue and white dishes. Very neat and pleasing. On table Number three was a checked orange and white cloth, plain white china, and a centerpiece of fruit.

A few sprays of flowers, a small growing plant, or a bowl of fruit surely does help the appearance of a table. But we must not spend all our time talking about china, and linen, and decorations. It is time to get on with our knitting.

The first of Friday's questions comes from Montana: "Is it all right to serve sugar, on a child's breakfast cereal?" And here is the answer: Cooked cereals, and ready-to-eat cereals, should be served with very little, if any, sugar. If the cereal is heavily sweetened, a child is likely to eat so much that he neglects other, and much-needed foods. If carefully salted, cooked cereals are quite likely to satisfy the taste of a hungry youngster, without the addition of sugar.

Question Number Two: "Have you ever heard of popped corn being used as breakfast food for children?" The answer: Popped corn has much the same food value as breakfast food, and can be served occasionally in generous bowls, to healthy children. Popped corn, served with milk, is a better combination than popped corn with sugar or butter, as it is often served between meals.

Question Number Three: "What do you think of serving rather rich foods, just occasionally, at children's parties?"

I think it is rather bad practice. Refreshments for children should not include foods which are rich, or highly seasoned. If the party refreshments can be served at a regular meal-time, so much the better, for there will be less danger of over-eating. A good bill-of-fare for a children's party includes cocoa, or some other milk drink; fruit; sandwiches; ice cream or a gelatin dessert; plain, frosted cake; and simple candies.

Let the table be attractive, and serve the food in unusual ways and forms. Animal cookies, for instance, taste so much better than ordinary round ones. By the way, I wonder how many of you noticed a cartoon in the papers, about two weeks ago, called "A Lost Art." The cartoon pictured mother, standing before a hot stove, while three tousled youngsters placed cookies of their own designing in the oven. Those were the good old days -- when there was always room in the oven for a fat gingerbread boy, with a row of raisin buttons down his gingerbread vest. But here I am -- getting off the subject again.

I have three breakfast menus for you today, suggested by the Bureau of Home Economics. Although these breakfasts are intended for children, they are

just as suitable for grown-ups. Fruit has been included in all three menus. Fruit, fresh or cooked, stimulates the appetite, and makes one enjoy the rest of the meal. Fruit supplies necessary vitamins and minerals, too. At this season of the year, many of you are serving home-canned fruits; such dried fruits as prunes, peaches, apricots, and figs; and such fresh fruits as apples, oranges, bananas, and grapefruit. A tart, fresh applesauce is a tasty breakfast fruit. Sometime, when you want to vary the fruit course, try a combination of equal parts of stewed apricots and prunes. This dried fruit combination is called "prunecots."

Variety may be found in breakfast cereals, too. A hot dish of oatmeal and milk is a favorite with my family, on cold, frosty mornings. Oatmeal is an energy-giving food, and it supplies minerals, and roughage. Oatmeal is a very tasty food, when properly salted. Some people do not salt their cereals enough, and the result is a flat, insipid dish. To give variety to breakfast cereals, one may add a few raisins, figs, or dates, or serve them with sliced bananas, peaches, and so forth.

Rice, properly cooked, is a tempting breakfast food, served with cream and sugar, or with butter and brown sugar. But be careful that you do not put much sugar on the cereal served to children. Another good breakfast food is whole wheat, which has been cracked. Cooked in boiling salted water, and served with cream and sugar, cracked wheat is one of the most appetizing of breakfast cereals.

The cereal foods are an important part of our diet; in fact, the cereal foods, including bread, furnish one-fourth of the energy needed by the body. Bread is the commonest cereal food in this country. Well-baked bread, and thoroughly cooked breakfast cereals, with milk, should make up a large part of a child's diet. Bread can sometimes take the place of a cereal mush, and cereal mushes may take the place of bread, but of course neither one can take the place of milk, meat, eggs, fruits, and fresh vegetables, in the daily diet.

Take your pencils, please, for the three breakfast menus, for children: Menu Number I: Pears, raw or canned; Coddled Egg; Whole Wheat Muffins; and Milk. Menu Number II: Orange Juice; Cereal and Whole Milk; Toast. Menu Number III: Sliced Bananas and Milk; Bacon; Cornbread; and Milk to drink. There's not much danger of getting too much milk, in the breakfast menu.

Now we have just time enough for a brief review of last Friday's lesson. Do you remember the six different kinds of foods, which should be included in the daily diet, of a growing child? First, milk; second, eggs, or a little meat, or fish; third, fruit; fourth, whole-grain cereal foods, or whole-wheat bread, or potatoes; fifth, some vegetable besides potatoes; and sixth, a little butter or cream, in every meal.

If you have any questions, about children's diet, you may forward them to me, in care of Station _____;

